

## Workshop Descriptions and Presenter Biographies

### **The War in Israel and Gaza: Trauma and Self-Care**

(Tuesday, 10:00-11:15)

Being a Jew forever changed on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Political differences, antisemitism, pro-Palestinian sentiments, and the like are not new. Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, however, there has been a fundamental shift in the ways we perceive our own vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of those we are called to serve. In order to push forward, we must balance the needs of congregants as well as our own well-being, which includes the recognition of, and sensitivity to, trauma. This talk will focus on the ways in which we are and perceive ourselves to be vulnerable, the nature of trauma and its effects, and how to soothe and care for ourselves and our loved ones. Practical strategies will be addressed.

**Dr. Jori Berger-Greenstein** obtained her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio in 1999. As a licensed psychologist, she has been actively involved in patient care, teaching, and research. Clinical areas of expertise include trauma and trauma-focused care, ethics, and working with people affected by medical illness. She is currently a Clinical Associate Professor at the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine in the Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine Program, where she has taught for 19 years. She is also a clinician at Boston Medical Center and a member of BMC's Ethics Committee and Ethics Consult Teams. She recently became the Behavioral Science Faculty Director for Medical Residency training in the Dept of Family Medicine at BMC. Dr. Berger-Greenstein, her husband, and two children have been members of Congregation B'nai Shalom for 9 years.

### **Enhancing your Singing through the Alexander Technique**

(Tuesday, 11:30-12:30 or 3:30-4:30)

In this workshop, we will explore how the alignment of the head, neck and back affects good voice production. There will be some visualizing, some hands-on work, and the observation of a few participants. Be prepared to 'Sing through all your bones'!

**Mara Sokolsky** trained at the School for Alexander Studies in London and qualified in 1980. Since then, she has taught privately in Boston, New York and Providence. She taught group classes at the New England Conservatory of Music and through the music department of Rhode Island College. She has also worked with cantorial students at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

## **Turn The Kaleidoscope: A New Way To Approach Teaching Music To Young Children** (Tuesday, 11:30-12:30)

Join Ellen Allard for a deep dive into the powerful role of music in bolstering skill development in young children. Discover the myriad ways in which music can fuel cognitive, language, physical, social-emotional, and spiritual growth. Ellen will help you “turn the kaleidoscope” and see music teaching in an entirely new light. Learn practical tools and innovative strategies that will help you realize the potential that simple songs have for elevating and enhancing learning for the children in your programs.

**Ellen Allard**, a multi-award-winning Recording Artist, Performer, Music Educator, Composer, and Coach, is one of the most sought-after performers in Jewish early childhood music. With a strong commitment to nurturing community through music, Ellen has a unique, charismatic, charming, and heartwarming way of inviting audiences to join in playful singing, whether she is performing a concert, presenting a workshop, or leading her interactive, engaging Tot Shabbat and Wow Worship services.

Ellen holds a BA in music from Boston University and a master’s degree in early childhood education from Arcadia University. Ellen is certified as a holistic health coach (<https://www.ellenshealthykitchen.com>), baby/toddler yoga teacher, Kidding Around Yoga and Yoga Yeladim teacher, and Rhythm ‘n’ Ruach teacher. She lives in Boston, MA and has two daughters and sons-in-law who have blessed her with six grandchildren and three rambunctious granddogs.

## **Sacred Sounds Reborn** (Tuesday, 2:00 – 3:15)

An exciting new musical project that uses the traditional nusach as composed by Cantor Adolph Katchko as a starting point, mixing in contemporary melodies and meaningful English. It is a new way to compose sacred music, using nusach as the anchor, seeking English words to bring it closer to our hearts, and melodies to stay with us as we pray.

Nusach, the base of all our sacred music, has been relegated to an antique piece brought out only for special occasions in most contemporary synagogues. With these new compositions we hope to change that. It is our hope that they will be sung and used often, bringing tradition and a new sacred song together.

**Deborah Katchko-Gray** is a fourth-generation cantor, the second woman to serve a traditional synagogue as cantor (1981), a former student of Elie Wiesel z'l, and the founder of the Women Cantors' Network (1982). She is a writer, teacher, fiber tallit artist, recording artist, cellist, crafter and proud Bubbie. [www.cantordebbie.com](http://www.cantordebbie.com) \_

**Beth Styles** is an award winning composer/producer/artist whose work has been celebrated in diverse houses of worship across the country and abroad. Her work includes writing and producing music for Diana Ross, Neshama Carlebach and Azi Schwartz. [www.bethstyles.com](http://www.bethstyles.com)

## **New Rituals For Changing Times**

(Tuesday, 3:30-4:30 and Wednesday, 1:45-2:45)

The times, they are a-changin', and synagogues and congregations have new events to commemorate, and new ways to think about simchas. How should we acknowledge the separation of the Covid pandemic or address a charged topic such as the war in Gaza in our services? How might we rearrange the concept of coming of age for children who are questioning their gender or who identify as nonbinary? What good ideas for devising a Pride Shabbat or a Racial Justice Shabbat could we share? In this workshop, we'll talk about examples of how we can incorporate ritual additions, special readings, congregational participation, or other prayerful moments into our services to acknowledge and honor the events that shape our modern Jewish lives.

**Dr. Rachel Adelstein** is an ethnomusicologist, and the Ritual Coordinator at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel in New Haven, Connecticut. Her published and forthcoming work addresses women's music and agency in Jewish sacred spaces, the music of British synagogues, and the history and meaning of congregational melodies in Jewish life.

## **Songs That Build Rapport and Transform Your Early Childhood Music Programs**

(Wednesday, 9:30-10:30)

Discover how to capture the hearts, minds and souls of young children through the powerful medium of song. Ellen will share songs that are guaranteed to ignite your creativity, build your confidence, and delight your young students. Return to your programs with a renewed dedication for making music the centerpiece of your early childhood music programs.

**Ellen Allard** (see above)

## **Kol Bo Panel**

(Wednesday 9:30-10:30)

Join Cantorial Soloist Mitzi Schwartz (Ojai, CA), Rabbi-Cantor Robbi Sherwin (Parker, CO) and Cantor Stephanie Weishaar for an interactive discussion on the joys and pitfalls of being Kol Bo (the whole ball of wax) for a Jewish community (not as easy as it sounds!) Come prepared to learn and laugh!

**Mitzi Schwarz** is passionate about music, healing, teaching, and spirituality. Having led services since 2001, she began serving the Jewish Community of Ojai as Kol Bo in 2020. There, she leads

Friday night services, teaches both young people and adults to leyn Torah, helps prepare bar and bat mitzvah students, and is called upon to offer spiritual counseling and guidance.

Mitzi's Kol Bo journey began in the world of musical theater and concertizing. She earned her MA in Jewish Studies from the Academy for Jewish Religion, California. Having previously worked as a hospice chaplain, she currently officiates at the full range of life cycle events. In 2014, Mitzi released her first CD, "Remember Who You Are: Songs of The Spirit". You can hear samples of her vocal talent at [mitzismusic.com](http://mitzismusic.com).

**Rockin' Rabbi-Cantor Robbi Sherwin** hails from the Live Music Capitol of the World, Austin, Texas, and is an energetic performer & Artist-in-Res, specializing in Jewish retreats and songwriting. She brings an infectious love of Judaism from babies to bubbies! An award-winning, multi-published composer of 100+ Jewish songs, pre-covid Robbi toured extensively with her band, Sababa! with Steve Brodsky and Scott Leader. Robbi has recorded 6 CDs of original Jewish folk/rock tunes and her music has been performed, recorded and covered from Tulsa to Tel Aviv, Seattle to Sydney. Robbi was one of the first women featured on Jewish Rock Radio. She is proud to be a past president of the Women Cantors' Network and was the 2023 WCN commissioned composer creating "Kol Y'mei Chayai" (every day of my life) based on Psalm 23. She has served congregations as Kol Bo in Colorado, Texas and Idaho. Now, finally living in Colorado, she enjoys the "Rocky Mountain chai life" with a smitten attitude of high-altitude gratitude.

**Hazzan Stephanie Weishaar** has served as the Spiritual Leader of Kol Nefesh congregation in Columbia, Maryland, since 2014. Prior to her work in Jewish music, she earned a degree in international relations and spent many years in nonprofit development in Ukraine, Russia, and the US. Stephanie's volunteer work has centered around interfaith collaboration, education, and the arts. After raising two wonderful children, she followed her dream to study in seminary and was ordained by ALEPH in 2021. Stephanie lives on a farm in Maryland with her husband and their two ridiculous dogs.

## **Ladino Song and Sefardí (Spanish/Portuguese) Tefillot**

(Wednesday, 10:45-11:45)

Did you know the first established synagogue in the United States was Sefardic and located in New York? Here, they spoke Ladino and chanted in the traditional native tongue of their homeland. Learn about Congregation Shearith Israel at

<https://www.shearithisrael.org/about/our-history/congregational-history/>. Workshop participants will be able to incorporate Ladino song/Sefardi tefillah into particular lifecycle events or synagogue services.

**Lealiza Lee**, a Detroit-based singer-songwriter, crafts cinematic folk fusion, drawing inspiration from Jewish themes and musical motifs, showcased in her album "Thorns and Petals." She has studied Ladino song traditions with Hazzan Ramon Tasat, Judeo-Arabic influences with Rabbi Moshe Tessone, and Flamenco with Alfonso Cid. Mentored by Cantors Daniel Gross and Penny Steyer in chant and nusach, Lealiza's work is featured in the Kol Isha Songbook and the Adding Our Voices Archive. Lealiza.com and for more: <https://go.lealiza.com/music-hub-9547>

**Star Wahnnon** is the great granddaughter of the distinguished and celebrated Reverend James Mesod Wahnnon who served at Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish/Portuguese Synagogue of New York City, the first synagogue in the US. Her grandfather, Shamash Martin James Wahnnon and her father, James Robert Wahnnon, also chanted there. Although Star lives on Long Island with her husband and two daughters, she serves Temple Beth El in Ithaca, NY . She has performed concerts, participated in services and taught classes in synagogues all over the United States. As a Sefardí Jew, Star is proud to be the vice president of Conversos Unidos, an organization that supports Hispanics who are reclaiming their Jewish roots.

### **Tools and Techniques for Teaching Neuro-diverse Students** (Wednesday 10:45-11:45)

Do you teach a variety of different kinds of learners? Teaching neuro-typical and neuro-atypical individuals how to chant Torah and Haftarah can be rewarding. Hebrew texts that are visually helpful can make your job easier. This workshop will explore how you can match different kinds of freely available innovative Hebrew texts with different kinds of learners in order to keep them challenged without being frustrated. We'll explore tips and techniques for using these Hebrew texts as well as ideas for enhancing them according to your needs.

**Linda Sue Sohn** has been teaching children and adults to chant Torah and Haftarah texts for over 20 years. She was ordained as a Hazzan at Hebrew College in June 2011, while also earning a Master of Jewish Education with a specialization in Jewish Special Education. Her studies concentrated on developing teaching techniques and innovative Hebrew text formatting methods for individuals of all learning styles.

Her website CantorEducator.com combines her expertise as a software usability engineer with her work as a cantor and Jewish special educator. This website is visited by colleagues and other visitors from around the world and focuses on providing free innovative chanting tools, recordings, and Hebrew sacred texts formatted for novice Hebrew readers (and for those who teach them) both in print and on-line.

### **New Rituals For Changing Times** (Wednesday 1:45-2:45)

See above

## **The Art of Sacred Listening: Approaching Difficult Discussions in Troubling Times** (Wednesday 1:45-2:45)

Sacred listening begins by acknowledging that we are all created "B'tzelem Elohim." Regardless of our differing opinions, we start by seeing that spark of the Eternal One in each other and continue to honor our common humanity throughout our interactions. Sacred listening requires that we approach each discussion by listening actively, using reflective phrasing to clarify concepts (i.e. what I hear you saying is "X." Is that correct?) and responding thoughtfully, without judgment. This workshop will focus on the techniques we can use to facilitate Sacred Listening, and then provide opportunities to put them into practice.

**Linda Matorin Sweenie** retired in June 2023 after twenty-five years in the pulpit, first at Congregation Beth Torah in Overland Park, KS, and then at Temple B'nai Israel in Oklahoma City, OK. She is now livin' the dream in beautiful Las Cruces, NM with her husband Glenn Philips and their dog Roxie.

## **Reflective Shabbat: A Model for More Deeply Experiencing Shabbat in Congregational Worship** (Wednesday, 3:15-4:15)

Shabbat is our day of rest. Kabbalat Shabbat was originally created as a deeply mystical experience through which we could embody Shabbat, gain an extra soul, and feel more deeply connected to a sense of the Divine. Can the way we bring in Shabbat reflect this in our communal prayer experiences? This model focuses on niggunim and chant-based musical meditations to take our congregation on a journey into the soul to enter Shabbat. We'll model some of the experience, then deconstruct and discuss the core ideas and methods behind it.

**Rachel Gurevitz** has been Senior Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough for 12 years. She was ordained at HUC-JIR NY in 2006. Prior to entering rabbinical school, Jewish music was her way into Jewish communal work, leading Shir B'Yachad in the UK for 6 years to bring new Jewish music to communities in an informal monthly song session. She has a passion for interfaith work, having co-founded Central MA Connections in Faith, an organization that focuses on connecting local people to enter into dialogue and genuine connection. She is also an amateur whiskey enthusiast with a Certificate in Scotch Whisky from the Edinburgh Whisky Academy. She hosts 'A Dram and a Drash' podcast on all things Jewish and whisky. Learn more at <https://rabbirg.com/dram-and-drash-podcast/>

**Sharon Brown Goldstein** is in her Chai year at Congregation B'nai Shalom. In addition to her bimah responsibilities, Sharon tutors b'nai mitzvah and teaches religious school music. With a BA in English from the University of Rochester, (an English major prepares you for life!), Sharon has taken courses at Hebrew College and in the New England Conservatory's undergraduate diploma program. She is grateful to have studied voice with Renee Fleming, D'Anna Fortunato, and Frank Kelley. Sharon is a long-time member of the Zamir Chorale of Boston. She and her husband enjoy watching the seasons change at their lakeside home in Hopkinton, MA.

**Lisa Marcus** is a cantorial soloist, pianist, composer and arranger, serving Congregation B'nai Shalom and Newbridge on the Charles in Dedham, MA. She began her full-time music career in Madrid, playing rock, jazz, Latin jazz fusion and flamenco. She studied arranging and jazz piano at Berklee College of Music, where she was the recipient of the John Dankworth Award for excellence in arranging. After playing and singing jazz for 20 years, Lisa felt called to the bimah as a cantorial soloist. At CBS she co-leads Shabbat and High Holy Day services, conducts the adult choir, and conducts and writes the arrangements for a 10-piece band that infuses worship with jazz, Latin and other musical styles. Lisa also serves as a piano and guitar accompanist for other local cantors and Jewish choirs. She is a two-time Shalsholet Festival composer with a growing body of compositions for liturgy and Jewish music performance. Lisa lives in Boxborough, MA.

## **Inaugural Dr. Rabbi Patricia Spence Rudden Lecture: Galeet Dardashti**

(Wednesday, 4:30-6:00)

As vocalist, composer, anthropologist, and producer, **Galeet Dardashti** has earned a reputation as a trail-blazing performer and advocate for Middle Eastern and North African Jewish culture. Dardashti is the first woman to continue her family's tradition of distinguished Persian and Jewish musicianship.

Dardashti is widely known as leader/founder of the renowned all-woman powerhouse Sephardi/Mizrahi Jewish ensemble Divahn, which released its most recent album, "Shalhevet," in 2020. According to the Jerusalem Report, Dardashti's "sultry delivery spans international styles and clings to listeners long after the last round of applause." Dardashti's nationally acclaimed release, *The Naming*, musically interprets some of the compelling women of the Bible. *Time Out New York* described *The Naming* as "urgent, heartfelt and hypnotic;" *The Huffington Post* called it "heart-stopping."

Dardashti's new award-winning (Global Music Award) multi-sensory project and album, *Monajat*, is inspired by old and haunting recordings of the Jewish prayers of Selichot chanted by her famed Persian grandfather, Younes Dardashti. Galeet reinvents the ancient ritual by singing with remixed samples of her grandfather's legacy recordings and composing a soundscape of original music performed by an acclaimed ensemble of Middle Eastern and jazz musicians and accompanied by dynamic video art.

In *The Nightingale of Iran*—the new hit documentary podcast series Dardashti co-created and co-produced with her sister, Danielle Dardashti, the sisters explore their family history—including the story of their Iranian grandfather, known as "The Nightingale of Iran." Their journey reveals painful secrets unspoken for generations.

Dardashti also has over two decades of cantorial experience with varied communities. This past year she lead High Holidays with Kanisse in Manhattan—one of the first egalitarian Sephardi/Mizrahi communities in the country.

As a scholar, Dardashti holds a Ph.D. in anthropology and specializes in Mizrahi culture and music; her current book project explores the Mizrahi piyyut (sacred song) phenomenon in contemporary Israel. She has held Assistant Professor positions at New York University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. Dardashti is currently a Fellow at University of Pennsylvania's Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies. Dardashti offers scholar/artist-in-residencies, lectures, and workshops on her academic and artistic work throughout North America and beyond.

## Evening Events

### ***The Dybbuk*** presented by Arlekin Players Theatre

(Tuesday evening)

The Dybbuk is an ancient, fantastical, mystical Yiddish folktale about love, ghosts, possession, and the yearning and continual search for a home for the Jewish soul and people. Presented at The Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture.

**Arlekin Players Theatre**, founded by Artistic Director Igor Golyak in 2009, is an artist-driven company created with and for immigrant actors from the former Soviet Union. For over a decade, we have told powerful stories and invented new forms of theater in both Russian and English, working to build vital connections and create shared human experience. We take special pride in exploring questions of self-identity and working on productions that play on the ideas of culture, identity, home, tradition, the idea of nationality, finding common themes that unite us all.

During our first ten years, Arlekin was invited numerous times to perform on the world-famous stage of the Moscow Art Theatre and at international festivals including the prestigious Mondial du Théâtre in Monaco. During our 10th Anniversary Season, we received a sweep of Boston's Elliot Norton Awards, including Best Production, Best Designer, Best Actress and Best Director, with a ceremony watched on Zoom due to the sudden closures of COVID. During the pandemic, while most theaters worldwide were shuttered, we wasted no time in transforming our small theater into the Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab, developing a new genre and producing two international virtual theater productions, *State vs Natasha Banina* and *chekhovOS /an experimental game/*, which featured Obie winner Jessica Hecht as Ranevskaya and Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov. These productions went viral, catapulting Arlekin onto the international stage, receiving international attention (with audiences in over 40 countries) and receiving rave press, including two New York Times Critics' Picks. This work has positioned Arlekin and our founder, Igor Golyak, as innovators and international leaders in the virtual theater movement.



We remain committed to connecting in new ways, creating meaningful, groundbreaking artistic productions, and continually reinventing what theater is for our community in Boston and for an increasing audience across the globe.

### **Women and Whiskey** (Wednesday evening)

Come and learn about different kinds of whiskey, and some of the women who are Master Distillers and Master Blenders behind some award-winning whiskies. This will be an educational tasting seminar led by a whiskey enthusiast who loves to share her love of the complexities, diversity and stories behind the whiskey! We'll be tasting Scotch, Bourbon, and Rye whiskeys.

**Rachel Gurevitz** (see above)